

the President's Award, a recipient of the Chief Engineer's Award, and a two-time recipient of the Fire Fighter of the Year Award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me today to recognize Robert Stephens's dedication to volunteer work and the East Norriton Fire Engine Company and the contributions he has made to the East Norriton community and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

REGARDING H.R. 4280, THE
H.E.A.L.T.H ACT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I'm holding my nose and voting against H.R. 4280, which would limit medical malpractice awards. I am not pleased that we are voting on this bill again, since an identical bill is languishing over in the Senate and I doubt that by passing it today we will jolt the Senate into moving on the bill. I think the vote today has more to do with politics than with policy.

I think we're beating a dead horse. Both sides have dug in and aren't willing to compromise. In the meantime, we aren't doing anything to reform our medical liability system and we aren't doing anything to make health care more affordable and accessible for Americans. Our system is inherently adversarial and we've continued this fingerpointing game and done nothing to improve patient safety and health care access, which is what we're really talking about here.

I think we need a system that is non-punitive and encourages openness and improvement so that doctors can report medical errors without fear of being sued. This will help us understand medical errors and improve procedures and patient safety. Fewer medical errors will result in fewer medical malpractice suits, which in turn will help keep malpractice insurance rates and health care premiums down. That's why I voted for H.R. 663, the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act, which would create a voluntary medical error reporting system under which patient safety organizations would receive, on a confidential basis, and analyze information on reported errors. They would then be expected to develop and disseminate evidence-based information to help providers implement changes in practice patterns that help to prevent future medical errors. In addition to this legislation, I think we should explore ideas like alternate dispute resolution, no-fault systems, and medical courts.

I also want to make it clear that I am not opposed to capping damages because I think it helps keep health care costs down and keeps doctors accessible, like in my home State of Colorado where we have caps. However, I think H.R. 4280 sets low and arbitrary limits on damages, which will hurt those at the bottom of the income scale the most. Also, I don't think we should be shielding large and powerful HMOs and drug companies from liability.

Mr. Speaker, ultimately this issue is about health care access and patient safety. If we aren't going to compromise, I hope we'd start thinking outside the box on how to end the logjam on tort reform. I offer these ideas as a way to get there, because we aren't going to get there from where we are today.

RECOGNIZING ASIAN AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the month of May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and to pay tribute to the 120,000 individuals of Asian descent I represent in California's 32nd Congressional District. I am fortunate to represent an ethnically diverse district that has experienced first hand the economic and cultural contributions of the Asian Pacific American community.

Although less than 4 percent of the U.S. population is Asian, I am proud that 19 percent of the congressional district I represent is of Asian descent. Some cities in my congressional district have a well-established Asian Pacific American community. Monterey Park, for example, is home to a vibrant Asian American community and has a City Council that is majority Asian. Other cities in the congressional district I represent, like West Covina, have experienced an increase in their Asian population in more recent times. From 1980 to the present, West Covina's Asian Pacific American population has grown from 4 percent to 23 percent.

Asian Pacific Americans bring diversity to our community and also contribute to our economy and to our advancement as a nation. Asian Pacific Americans have made vast contributions in the fields of medicine, technology, and agriculture that benefit all Americans. Furthermore, throughout times of heightened national security, Asian Pacific Americans have fought to protect democracy in every war since the Civil War. For example, despite the disturbing racism toward Japanese Americans during World War II, Japanese Americans volunteered to serve in the armed forces as part of the 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team remains the most decorated unit in U.S. military history. Not only did these Japanese servicemen show their loyalty to the United States, but they also earned more than 18,000 individual decorations in less than 2 years. These noble service members deserve our recognition.

In closing, I would like to commend organizations in California's 32nd Congressional District that exemplify and promote Asian diversity during Asian American Heritage Month.

A TRIBUTE TO JOAN PETERSON

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Joan Peterson in recognition of her substantial contributions to her community.

Upon gazing on their beautiful baby girl, parents Emily Cole and John Stafford named her Joan, celebrating the namesake of both grandmothers.

Joan spent her early years of elementary education at Clio Public School where her grandmother, Joan Guice taught first grade,

her mother taught 10th grade and her grandfather Professor Charles Guice served as principal for 50 years. Her latter years were spent at St. Joseph Catholic School where she graduated 8th Grade. Upon completing elementary school, she attended Holy Rosary High School in Lafayette, Louisiana and graduated with honors.

Joan attended college at Tuskegee University with a major in Nursing Education. However, when her mother moved the family to Brooklyn, New York, she enrolled at Medgar Evers College and completed her education in Business Management. She later attended New York University and received a certificate as an Administrative Assistant.

Joan worked with the United Negro College Fund as an Employee Associate where she began to develop a format that would bring together all graduates of other black colleges to participate in a job market. This has now evolved as a site on the Internet for job placements.

Joan later met and married hometown friend, David Peterson, Jr. From their union, two children, Danielle and David Peterson III, were born. The children attended St. Paul Community Christian School where Joan became very involved in her children's education and participated in all fundraising activities. When the children transferred to P.S. 308, Joan continued to be active and was the Financial Secretary for the P.T.A. until her daughter Danielle graduated. Joan joined the Concerned Women of Brooklyn in which she is still an active member. In 1997, Joan's husband became ill and passed away. Subsequently, Joan bought a house and moved to Bedford-Stuyvesant, where she immediately joined the Block Association where she now serves as Financial Secretary.

Joan presently works for the Health and Hospital Corporation as a Senior Systems Analyst. In her sixteen years of service, she has worked in several areas, Office of Affiliations, Construction Management, Kings County Reconstruction Project, Elmhurst Modernization Project, Accounting Department and presently she is in the Receiving Department at Queens Hospital.

As a recipient of several awards as an Outstanding Leader in her community and school, Joan is interested in developing a program that would address young males, ages 10-18 years. Joan is a member of St. Paul Community Baptist Church, where Rev. Johnny Ray Youngblood is the senior pastor.

Mr. Speaker, Joan Peterson has actively participated in improving her community through various volunteer positions. As such, she is more than worthy of receiving our recognition today and I urge my colleagues to join me in honoring this truly remarkable person.

TRIBUTE TO THE 21ST SPACE
WING GUARDIAN CHALLENGE 2004

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 13, 2004

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 21st Space Wing at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado.

The 21st Space Wing, under the Command of Brigadier General Richard Webber, also